

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 13363 201344Z
ACTION OES-09

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DEPT FOR MCCLELLAND/OES - PASS TO TESI, NSF

PARIS FOR NASA REPRESENTATIVE

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: TSPA, IT
SUBJ: NSF-CNR DISCUSSIONS ON THE USE OF AN ITALIAN BASE FOR THE LAUNCH

OF U.S. SCIENTIFIC BALLOONS

REF: A) ROME 10139, B) ROME 12042

1. SCIATT HAS RECEIVED A COPY OF A LETTER FROM CNR (NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL) SPACE OFFICIAL LIVIO SCARSI TO NSF OFFICIAL GIORGIO TESI. THE FULL TEXT OF THIS LETTER, DATED JULY 5, FOLLOWS:

QTE. DEAR DR. TESI, WE ARE REALLY SORRY TO HEAR FROM YOU THAT THE TRANSATLANTIC BALLOON FLIGHT PLANNED FOR THIS SUMMER CANNOT TAKE PLACE. IT WOULD HAVE PERMITTED TO OPEN ONCE MORE THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN ITALY AND THE U.S. WHICH HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED IN 1977. WE HOPE NEVERTHELESS THAT WE MAY PICK UP THIS ACTIVITY NEXT YEAR.

THE ITALIAN NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL INTENDS TO
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ESTABLISH IN MILO A MODERN BALLOON LAUNCHING ABASE, THE QTE CONSIGLIO DI PRESIDENZA UNQTE WHICH IS THE HIGHEST DECISION-MAKING BOARD OF THE CNR HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED ITSELF FAVORABLY ON THE SUBJECT, AND IN THIS DIRECTION AS YOU KNOW, A THREE-YEAR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING HAS BEEN SIGNED BETWEEN ITALY, FRANCE AND SPAIN TO IMPLEMENT THE TRANSMEDITERRANEAN FLIGHTS.

IN OCCASIONAL CONTACTS WITH LEADERS OF SPACE ACTIVITIES IN

DIFFERENT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WE HAVE FOUND A LIVE INTEREST IN LONG-DURATION BALLOON FLIGHTS TAKING OFF FROM A EUROPEAN BASE, BUT THEY REALIZE THAT SUCH A PROJECT CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT U.S. PARTICIPATION; FOR TWO DIFFERENT REASONS: ON THE ONE HAND BECAUSE THE PAYLOADS MUST BE RETRIEVED IN THE U.S., ON THE OTHER HAND PARTICIPATION WOULD RAISE THE NUMBER AND SCIENTIFIC QUALITY OF THE PAYLOADS TO A LEVEL WHICH CAN JUSTIFY THE CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT IN THE BASE, NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED STANDARD OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND LOGISTICAL EFFECTIVENESS.

REFERRING THEREFORE TO THE LETTERS EXCHANGED BETWEEN NSF AND CNR AND TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ON BOTH SITES DURING THE MEETING WITH YOU IN ROME LAST MONTH, WE PROPOSE THAT A PLURIENNAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BE STIPULATED BETWEEN ITALY AND U.S., FOR A PROGRAM OF STRATOSPHERIC BALLOON LAUNCHES FROM THE MILO BASE WITH PAYLOAD RETRIEVAL IN THE U.S. TERRITORY.

THE MEMORANDUM SHOULD BE OF THE QTE NO EXCHANGE OF FUNDS UNQTE TYPE. THE MEMORANDUM SHOULD PERMIT ACCESS TO TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHTS FOR EXPERIMENTERS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, FOLLOWING RULES TO BE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON.

INASMUCH AS ITALIAN SCIENTISTS ARE FOR MANY REASONS INTERESTED ALSO IN BALLOON FLIGHTS IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE THAT AN EXTENSION OF THE MEMORANDUM SHOULD CONSIDER THE ACCESS OF ITALY TO THE U.S. BALLOON PROGRAMS IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.

RECIPROCALLY ITALY WOULD OFFER ITS BEST EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AUTHORIZATION FOR THE RETRIEVAL OF SCIENTIFIC PAYLOADS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LAUNCHED FROM MILO IN TERRITORIES OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE OTHER THAN THE U.S. IN VIEW OF ACHIEVING A FURTHER INCREASE IN FLIGHT DURATION.

I HOPE THAT THESE IDEAS MAY BE ACCEPTED SO THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES MAY START NEXT YEAR A PROGRAM OF LONG DURATION BALLOON ACTIVITY FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF OUR SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITIES. WITH BEST REGARDS, PROF. LIVIO SCARSI UNQTE.

2. COMMENT: THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT IS PRESENTLY CONSIDERING FUNDS FOR THE MILO BASE, AND SCARSI WOULD CLEARLY LIKE TO USE A USG COMMITMENT AS LEVERAGE IN DEALING WITH PARLIAMENT. WE ARE UNABLE TO MAKE EVEN A GUESS AS TO HIS CHANCES OF SUCCESS WITH AND WITHOUT SUCH A COMMITMENT.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: A USG RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL FOR A PLURIENNAL UNQTE MOU FOR THE BALLOON LAUNCHES. GARDNER

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